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In response to the Sage Grouse Habitat Restoration deadline of January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016, I am hereby submitting my concerns.

As a Native Washoe, I am deeply concerned about the Pine Nut Range. This range has been in existence for thousands of years and provided food source for our people for thousands of years.

All Native Peoples in Nevada, Washoe, Paiutes and Shoshones, consider the pine nut trees and juniper trees as a food source and as a medicine source.

Many of our ceremonies are dependent on of the Juniper tree for ceremonial and medicinal purposes. The Pine Nut Tree has been a prime food source for all our peoples. The pitch of the pine nut tree is also of medicinal use to our people.

The term 'treatment' that is proposed for the Sage Grouse Habitat is a word that is used in disguise for the clear cutting of our trees.

It takes 50years for a pine nut tree to produce it's first fruit, therefore a pine nut tree that is 150 years old is in it's prime, they are not considered old until 700 to 800 years of age.

We have been asked to specifically designate locations for our gathering by BLM officials and Forestry; our response to designating a specific area is 'the pine nut range'.

This covers from Sweetwater, to the Austin/Ely area, including the main range in the Virginia City/Carson City/Gardnerville area.

These trees do not bear every year, but every 3 to 4 years, so our

gathering areas vary depending on what areas are producing. Traditionally, our peoples have had to travel long distances to ensure a good harvest.

These trees are very sacred to us as Native peoples. The Paiute, Washoe and Shoshone have sung songs, prayed prayers, preformed ceremonies among these trees for generations.

Many of our people, our ancestors are buried in these mountains, there are many sacred sites throughout the pine nut ranges, therefore, I think the native concern for the protection of the Pine Nut Forest needs to be considered.

Forestry maps show that at least 60 % of the state of Nevada is currently sage brush and is the natural habitat for the Sage Grouse. We ask that the BLM/Forestry concentrate on these areas first, that these preexisting areas be the central focus of the Sage Grouse plan and NOT the Pine Nut Forest. ( map of sage brush distribution -State of Nevada

<http://www.prbo.org/calpif/htmldocs/mapdocs/sagebrush/sagehabitat.jpg>)

The birds that are currently to be found in the Pine Nut Range have either migrated there in spite of the Pine Nut Tree or have been transplanted into that area and are not naturally occurring.

To add to this, there have been Native Hunters in the Pine Nut range that have seen Sage Grouse among the pine nut trees. This would indicate that these birds have been using the pine nut trees as shelter from predators. (therefor the claim that the sage grouse are afraid of the single leaf Pinion are false)

Currently, according to USFS documentation, there are over 70 species of animals that use the pine nut trees for habitat.

(<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/pinmon/all.html>)

Also, another claim made by the sage brush commission, is that the

Pinion/juniper forest is encroaching on the sage brush is false. The pine nut/juniper forests that we currently have are a REMNANT of the forests that existed before the Comstock period(1849). There fore the statement that the pine nut tree has been encroaching on the sage brush lands is reverse...in actuality, the sage brush has been encroaching on the traditional forest lands of the pine nut tree. UNR has stated that a study of the petrified remains of former Pine Nut/Juniper forests should be used to determine the true range of the pine nut/juniper.

The forest service, the BLM, and the BIA are responsible for the import of Cheat Grass into the area which has created the fire hazard that now exists, NOT THE pine nut tree/Juniper.

(<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/junost/all.html>)

Government's management of these are areas is responsible for creating the fire hazard. They have greatly restricted the use/access of these lands by the different tribal entities which has been shown to help maintain these habitats.

Traditionally, our people have gone out to the pine nut ranges and have camped for up to 2 and 3 months at a time to gather and to hunt. The brush growth, dried limbs, and pine cones in the are were gather for camp use, thus the fuel in the area was kept to a minimum. Unlike the California natives that used fire as a tool to restore areas, the slow growth of our pine nut range(2 inches of growth per year in a good year) can not tolerate this method.

It is beyond understanding as to why the Single leaf Pinon, which is listed as one of the State of Nevada's trees, would be being clear cut. Not only is it protected under state law as the state tree, but it is of marketing value for it's nut. The Nut contains all 12 amino acids, high protein, and omega 3, 6, and 9 fatty acids...it is a complete food.

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pine\\_nut](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pine_nut) and

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/pinmon/all.html>)

This treatment for the 'sage grouse' would be a tragedy for the native Pine Nut Tree of Nevada and for the Native People.

Sincerely,

JB